

Message Text

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ACTION EB-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 STR-02 STRE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 CIAE-00 EUR-08 IO-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-01 /043 W
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P 221556Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5738

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS PRIORITY

USDEL MTN GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15013

LIMDIS

DEPT PASS STR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, GATT, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH POSITIONS ON TRADE ISSUES IN ART. 113

COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 9076, (B) LONDON 11925

1. ON SEPT. 22 WE HAD A CHAT WITH TOM SHARP, RECENTLY
BRITISH COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN WASHINGTON, WHO IS NOW
RESPONSIBLE FOR MTN QUESTIONS IN THE DEPT. OF TRADE.
SHARP WILL BE ATTENDING THE ART. 113 COMMITTEE MEETING
OF SEPT. 24, REPLACING ROBIN GRAY, WHO IS SERIOUSLY ILL.

2. SHARP SAYS HE IS INSTRUCTED, IN THE DISCUSSION OF
SAFEGUARDS, TO URGE STRONGLY THAT THE EC ADOPT A
POSITION ENDORSING THE "SELECTIVE" USE OF SAFEGUARDS.
THIS BRITISH STAND IS CONSISTENT WITH A DEVELOPING
WHITEHALL CONSENSUS THAT THE PRICE OF MAINTAINING EXIST-
ING LIBERAL TRADING RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND
NORTH AMERICA MAY BE DISCRIMINATORY RESTRICTIONS ON
CERTAIN IMPORTS FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD, WITH JAPAN
AND CERTAIN EFFICIENT LDC PRODUCERS OF INDUSTRIAL
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PRODUCTS THE LIKELIEST TO BE AFFECTED. SHARP NOTED THAT

THE US SAFEGUARD PROPOSAL PRESENTED IN THE MTNS BEFORE
THE SUMMER BREAK WAS SILENT ON SELECTIVITY; HOWEVER, HE
SAID, US LAW WOULD PERMIT SUCH AN APPROACH.

3. THE IDEA OF A MARCH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE TNC
IS TO COME UP AT LUNCH ON FRIDAY, ACCORDING TO SHARP.
HE IS INSTRUCTED TO EXPRESS MILD OPPOSITION TO SUCH A
MEETING, ON THE BASIS THAT THERE'S NO DEADLOCK TO BE
RESOLVED (SIC) AND THEREFORE NO NEED TO COLLECT
TOGETHER MINISTERS; MINISTERS SHOULD BE CONVOKED WHEN
THEIR PRESENCE IS REALLY NECESSARY. SHARP IS SUPPOSED
TO ARGUE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD SIMPLY "GET ON
WITH IT."

4. ANOTHER MIDDLE-LEVEL DEPT. OF TRADE OFFICIAL WILL
BE ACCOMPANYING SHARP TO HANDLE THE TEXTILE ISSUE.
SHARP'S UNDERSTANDING IS THAT HE IS TO TAKE THE LINE
THAT THE MFA SHOULD BE RENEWED BUT WITH REVISIONS THAT
WOULD MAKE IT LESS LIBERAL. SHARP'S ONLY SPECIFIC IN
THIS CONNECTION WAS TO NOTE THE "UNFAIRNESS" OF A
UNIVERSAL GROWTH PERCENTAGE TO A COUNTRY WHICH ALREADY
HAD A HIGH MARKET PENETRATION RATIO. (ON THIS SUBJECT
SEE ALSO REF. B.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXTILES, POLICIES, TRADE CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LONDON15013
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760358-0099
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760933/aaaabbxu.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 76 EC BRUSSELS 9076, 76 LONDON 11925
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRITISH POSITIONS ON TRADE ISSUES IN ART. 113 COMMITTEE MEETING
TAGS: ETRD, UK, GATT, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006